# Life's Mobile Clinic Revisits the Past

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The article "Life Around the World" which appeared in the June 15 issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic* was provocative. It outlined Dr. Sid Williams' plans to dispatch up to 20 self-contained traveling chiropractic clinics abroad. It's a good idea whose time apparently has come ... again.

Nearly 60 years ago, Dr. Leo

*Dr. Leo Spears with the original mobile clinic, circa 1940-41, at the Denver Civic Center.*

Spears of Denver, Colorado effectively employed a similar concept, perhaps for the first time in chiropractic. Dr. Spears, of course, was the dynamic (if not controversial) founder of the hospital which bore his name until 1983, when it closed.

The mobile clinic was part of the Spears trappings during the 1940-41 period, operated by Dr. Leo's nephew, Dr. Dan C. Spears. A 21-foot house trailer hitched to a 12-cylinder La Salle

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automobile, it traveled a 500-mile loop each week through eastern Colorado, covering 28 towns. Services were free to children and others who couldn't pay.

The trailer housed a hi-lo chiropractic table bolted to the floor; a desk and chairs; a lavatory; and a cot. It was heated by a kerosene stove, with electric power supplied by the car battery. Operations were discontinued for the duration of World War II.

A new, 30-foot version of the rolling clinic made its debut on June 4, 1951, to provide free treatment at Indian reservations in New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and Nevada. Dr. Leo Spears believed it was the first such enterprise in chiropractic history. But disaster struck on the fourth day out. The following dispatch was written for the press services by Elliott Chaze, a Denver novelist and former Associated Press regional chief who accompanied the ill-fated journey:

*The Spears Mobile Chiropractic Educational Unit, Circa mid-1950s. Spears Hospital is seen in the background.*

"Albuquerque, N.M. (AP) — A spectacular accident temporarily ended the expedition to provide free chiropractic treatment for American Indians. It occurred about 15 miles west of Albuquerque, N.M., when something went wrong with the trailer brakes, causing the 3-ton "rolling clinic" to go into a weave and overturn, together with the tow car ..., at the bottom of a two-mile grade.

Dr. (Kenneth) Everet and Elliott Chaze, his companion, miraculously escaped serious injury. Drs. (Arnold) Goldschmidt and (Stewart) Cain, following in the former's automobile, helped rescue Everet and Chaze. Dr. (Leo) Spears is undecided whether he will send out another free trailer clinic at this time."[1]

## "Trailer Wrecked"

Dr. Spears, who advocated natural treatment for cancer, arthritis, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy and other diseases, dispatched an educational trailer (a 35-footer) to tour throughout the Rocky Mountain region in the mid-1950s. It displayed a continuous loop of the Spears Hospital sound film "Chiropractic Proof," a photo gallery with histories of recovered patients, and educational literature.

*References*

1. *Spears Sanigram*, June 13, 1951.

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